

# Draft of education standards released

By Donna Gordon Blankinship  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Math and English instruction in the United States moved a step closer to uniform — and more rigorous — standards Wednesday as a draft of new national guidelines were released.

Supporters of the project led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers hope the lists of things kids should learn at each grade level will replace a patchwork of systems.

The effort is expected to lead to standardization of textbooks and testing and make learning easier for students who move from state to state.

The federal government recently opened bidding for \$350 million to work on new national tests that to be taken by students in states that adopt the national standards.

People involved in the effort endorsed by 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia said the new standards will raise expectations of student achievement in some states.

Texas and Alaska are the only states not participating in the national standards effort.

The developers hope to publish final education goals for K-12 math and English in May.

A glance at the math standards reveals the changes are not dramatic: Kids would still learn to count in kindergarten, not multiply and divide. Chris Minnich, director of standards and assessment for the Council of Chief State School Officers, said the main improvement is clarity and focus.

Each grade will have fewer goals in each subject area, but each goal goes deeper, the goals are written in plain English with little educational jargon, and some goals may start to show up earlier than expected.